

Online Retreat

<http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/cmo-retreat.html>

The Collaborative Ministry Office - Creighton University

Printer Friendly Version: Week 3

Guide

Perspective - A Picture of Harmony.

After two weeks of reviewing our story, and seeing it as a story of God's faithful presence in our lives, we move now to look at the bigger picture.

This week we want to reflect on, and be inspired by, God's creative desire for us, as part of the whole of creation.

St. Ignatius put it so simply:

God created us
to praise, reverence and serve God
and in this way to save our souls.
God created all of the rest of creation
to help us achieve the purpose for which
God created us.



Let's let the background of this whole week be two wonderful imaginative reflections:

- To simply walk around, doing all that I do each day, more and more conscious of WHY I was created:
To give praise to God.
To revere God: grow in awe and love for God.
To be of service: in God's service.
- To *notice* "the rest of creation" more consciously, and how all that I notice is intended by God to HELP ME - it is all created FOR ME.

Again, this is about *gratitude*. We want to *appreciate*, to become more *sensitized to* and more *aware of* something about God: God has an intense desire to help us achieve the end for which we were lovingly created by God. So, by our thinking and watching this week we are coming to know God better.

Again, make use of the helps to the right of this guide. Let this photo draw us into wonder and awe and a sense of God's plan for us. Let's try to begin and end each day this week with openness and delight in all that God intensely desires to show us.

Some Practical Help for Getting Started This Week.

For Week Three, our perspective changes. Notice the dramatic view in this week's photo. It gives us a picture of how to get started with this week.

It's about *perspective*. This week, we will try to step back and see the whole view of ourselves in creation. So, throughout the week, let that picture of an expanding view of our world help us with perspective. This week, try not to let anything become *too big*, and mess up our perspective.

It's about *purpose*. Concrete focusing can help greatly. Throughout the week, think of what things are *for*. We know what our coffee cup is *for*, what the toaster is *for*, what paper clips are *for*, what the telephone is *for*. As we consciously focus on the purpose everything in my life has, we will gradually feel the growing power of the words of Ignatius. It's all here for the purpose of helping me attain the end for which I was created.

Remember what we are *practicing*. We want to grow in the ability to find, see, experience some connection with God *in all things* - and right in the midst of our busy-ness. So, we keep focused on practicing the use of the *background times* each day. Perhaps, this week, I can especially focus on *going to places*. So, on the way - to a meeting, to the rest room, to my lunch, to my car - I will consciously reflect on my *purpose*. *With practice*, I can situate myself, in a brief few moments, on that overview site from the photo. En route to the rest room, I'll be sitting on one of those chairs and looking out, thinking, "I was created, as part of this whole vast creation, for the one purpose of praising, reverencing and serving you, Lord."

Remember the other helps *from past weeks*. Naming graces is important. Saying *Thank You* is critical. Try to *say it* - what is it that I'm receiving this week? "Lord, thank you for showing me the big picture." "Lord, thank you for reminding me about your desires for me."

Remember *our bodies*. What *posture* best says what I want to express? For example, I may imagine myself *standing* on that overlook in the photo and *raising my arms up* in praise. Then, perhaps, when I get out of bed and when I am ready to get in bed, I can raise my arms in praise that way, for only a moment. Or, maybe, as I look out over that vista, I imagine feeling drawn to kneel in awe before this God who is so much grander than I ever let God be. Perhaps I can kneel at the side of my bed for a brief moment. Or, maybe I will imagine myself sitting on one of those chairs looking out at this creation, and I just open my hands on my lap, symbolizing my openness to be of service, as I am called. Then, perhaps, when I begin work each day, I might lay my open hands on my desk, or kitchen counter, for just a moment. Powerful gestures that help us *interiorize* the gestures - and they take only a few moments.

Remember the *wallpaper*. By clicking on the photo, we are taken to the Photo Gallery page, and a larger image of the photo. From there, we can place our mouse cursor on the photo, and click on the mouse's right button. We will see a menu that has "Set as Wallpaper" as an option. If we click on that menu option, the photo becomes our desktop's wallpaper. Now, we can have this photo be a background reminder of *perspective*, all week. And, when others see our monitors, and ask about the photo, we can tell them about the retreat. (By the way, if there are lots of images *tiled* on your desktop, just right mouse click, and choose the last option, *Properties*. Then choose *Centered*, on the lower right, instead of *Tiled*.)

And remember to make use of the readings and prayers.

We are just beginning to see what God can do with our openness and trust.

For the Journey

A foundation of a building is called the "basement" or the basis or basic of the structure. In the Exercises Ignatius begins with a most basic foundational statement. It is a simple formula, but not always easy to accept. "Human beings are created." Each one is always being created by God's grace and the experiences of the natural living.

One of the more difficult factors to accept in being created is that we are limited that is, we have actual limitations of all kinds. We have age, size, abilities, personality and gifts, but they are all bordered by our not being God. We are who and what we are by God's creative love. Ignatius begins where we wish we might get to in time and with God's care.

Why we are being created is the second major section of this basement platform. Ignatius was aware of the many answers humanity had proposed to answer this huge question. He had accepted that there is a God and that he and we are creatures, but now the next big question had to be solved. How he answered these big questions and how we are invited to answer them, determined his life's style and will fashion ours. For Ignatius it was simple again, but not as easy to live.

With our limited selves, we are created to praise God for Who God is as infinite Creator, and for creating each of us with these sometimes-hard-to-accept, limitations. We are created as well to serve this Creating God with and through the gifts we have been given, of course, through and with these same limitations. No gift is meant just for ourselves, but they are gifts from God to me and through me to God's creating family.

The third aspect forming the major section of this basement is that in order to serve in praise this God, we must reverence creation which possesses God's finger prints. Reverencing God will become a way of living by our becoming aware of the very holy presence of this God in all other creatures. The challenge in our prayer is to be freed to reverence our own limitations enough so that in our life given to serve God, we gratefully allow those limitations to be public, yet prophetic.

In These or Similar Words

Dear Lord,

Today as I reflect on the world around me, it feels like gratitude is the first thing that comes to my mind. In the retreat this week I am trying to simply *notice* my life, to really see all of the wonderful gifts of nature that cross my path. Coming to work this morning, I couldn't help staring into an incredible sunrise through the cloudy sky. It created colors that were indescribable. A small tree in my yard is already turning colors, with bright red leaves that contrast with everything else that is still green. My tomato plants are still bearing fruit and the fall flowers are starting to line my sidewalk.

I see these as gifts to us - *us* - but I'm not sure I've ever really seen them as a gift from you to *me*. How can I fathom the depths of your love for me that you have created each flower, each leaf, for my enjoyment? I'll be honest, God. I usually don't tune into this kind of thing. I just don't always pay attention to the gifts of nature that are literally under my feet.

Now as I pray, as I pay attention, I am moved by the phrase in the prayer guide this week, "God has an intense desire to help us achieve the end for which we were lovingly created by God." Could you really have a real desire for *my life*? For what becomes of *me* - not just as one of the billions of people who inhabit this planet but for me as an individual?

I look outside at nature and inside at the family and friends you surround me with and I am so thankful. Please, Lord, help me to fully express my gratitude to you for my life and for the way you care for me. Help me to see what your desire for my life really is. I want to make my life a way to serve you.

Prayer to Begin Each Day:

**May all that I am today,
all that I try to do today,
may all my encounters, reflections,
even the frustrations and failings
all place my life in your hands.**

**Lord, my life is in your hands.
Please, let this day give you praise.**

Scripture Readings:

Ephesians 1:3-11

Psalm 138